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Fidelity trust company, Philadelphia

The Children's Playhouse and Playground

EAST
FAIRMOUNT
PARK
PHILADELPHIA

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CHILDREN'S PLAYHOUSE AND PLAYGROUND—EAST FAIRMOUNT PARK, PHILADELPHIA

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The Children's Playhouse and Playground

East Fairmount Park, Philadelphia

THE Children's Playhouse, in East Fairmount Park, owes its origin to the benevolence of Richard Smith, a prominent citizen of Philadelphia, and of his wife, Mrs. Sarah A. Smith.

Mr. Smith was a member of the firm of MacKellar, Smiths & Jordan, the well-known type-founders, and died on September 8, 1894. By his will he directed The Fidelity Insurance, Trust and Safe Deposit Company (appointed as his trustee) to construct in Fairmount Park a monumental memorial in memory of Pennsylvanians who took part in the Civil War, and further, to appropriate, lay out and expend the sum of fifty thousand dollars ($50,000) in the erection of a proper building and enclosing a children's playground, in such portion of Fairmount Park as may be designated by the Park Commissioners, the said building to have

a general hall as a playroom and shelter, with a connecting building provided with all necessary appliances for the safety and comfort of such children as may be brought there, seeking recreation, by parents, guardians or other caretakers, with chambers, with cribs and couches for them in case of sickness, and all proper nurses and attendants as may in the judgment, or with the approval of said trustee, be thought to be needful. The testator stated his preference that male children over ten years of age be excluded from said playground and building, so that it may be safely used for the recreation of the young.

Mrs. Sarah A. Smith died on May 3, 1895. By her will she bequeathed to The Fidelity Insurance, Trust and Safe Deposit Company her residuary estate in trust, to hold and use and dispose of the same for the maintenance, repair and improvement of the children's playhouse and grounds attached thereto, directed by the second clause of the residuary bequest in the will of Mr. Smith.

The assent of the Commissioners of Fairmount Park having been given, The Fidelity Insurance, Trust and Safe Deposit Company, as trustee, and James H. Windrim, as architect, erected the play-

house upon the selected site, Fountain Green Drive, near the East Park reservoir, and close to the Columbia avenue entrance to the Park.

The building is seventy-six feet in front by fifty-two feet in depth, surrounded by a terrace, with porches sixteen feet in width, on a level with the first floor; the ground area thus covered by the building is one hundred and ten feet by eighty-six feet. It is two stories in height, with a finished basement extending under the porches and terraces, is substantially constructed of brick and is fire-proof throughout. The exterior of the building is faced with a mottled gray brick, of Pompeiian size, laid in white mortar. The trimmings to the doors and windows and the columns of the colonnades are of Indiana limestone. The style of architecture is Colonial. Upon the two facades fronting the river and the driveway are colonnades with Ionic columns and recessed loggia upon the first and second floors.

The building contains on the basement floor a large playroom, with tricycles, swings, velocipedes, ten pins, quoits, play wagons, see-saw, etc.; on the main, or entrance floor, a reading and reception room, with books, piano, musical box, graphophone, etc., and the Superintendent's office and dispensary

(with trained hospital nurse in attendance during the busy season).

The second floor is reserved for the use of the sick, and also for infants under five years, for whom baby hammocks, baby jumpers, rocking horses and blocks are provided. This floor contains also cots and private rooms.

The building is heated throughout with hot water, lighted with gas and electricity, and provided with lunch room, diet kitchen, nursery, bath room, toilet rooms, etc.

The adjoining playground contains a sand pavilion, holding twelve tons of white sand, and tables for picnics, etc., and will be, in the course of time, more fully improved by the trustee. The whole is to be enclosed with an iron fence and quick-set hedge.

The building was thrown open for its intended use upon July 23, 1899, and has met with encouraging patronage from the start. The average daily attendance for the summer of 1899 was 350, and twice (August 17th and 24th) reached 1000. On Easter Monday, April 16, 1900, and Decoration Day, May 30, 1900, the attendance was also 1000. The total number of visitors for the first year is

estimated to be about 65,000. The building will afford shelter for 2000 persons in case of storm; and close by is a spring of water noted for its purity.

The trustee desires that the benefit of this great public charity shall be well known throughout the entire city, and cordially invites all those interested in benevolent work among children to assist by bringing them to the Playhouse. The trustee is not authorized to expend the trust funds in transportation and this must be provided from outside sources. When it is intended to bring large numbers at one time it is advisable to communicate beforehand with the Superintendent.

Attention is called to the rules annexed, and particularly let it be noted that the primary intention of the founder of this charity is to provide a playground for children, and a building with playroom and shelter. In order to ensure the safety of the young children for whose recreation the Playhouse is specially intended, the will states the testator's desire that boys over the age of ten years shall be excluded, and the trustee will enforce his wishes in that respect.

In no sense should this charity be regarded as

a hospital for sick children. While the trustee, in accordance with Mr. Smith's will, has provided chambers with cribs and couches for them in case of sickness, it will be understood that such accommodations are only intended for emergency cases, and unless required by an absolute necessity, no child will be permitted to remain over night.

Nor is the Shelter intended as a Day Nursery. It is for "such children as may be brought there seeking recreation, by parents, guardians or other caretakers." The trustee will not assume the care of children unattended by parents or other persons responsible for their custody.

Nor is it to be expected that the trustee shall provide food for the children in the Shelter, as it would be obviously impossible to do so, and it is clear that the testator had no intention of this kind.

RULES

1. The Children's Playhouse and Playground will be open every day from May 1st to November 1st, from 9 o'clock a. m. to 7 o'clock p. m.; and from November 1st to May 1st from 9 o'clock a. m. to 4 o'clock p. m.

2. The Playhouse and Playground are intended for the recreation of such young children as may be brought there by parents, guardians or other caretakers, who will be held responsible for the safety and behavior of the children in their charge.

3. In accordance with the will of the founder, boys over the age of ten years will not be admitted.

4. Visitors other than the children for whom the Playhouse and Playgrounds are intended, and their caretakers, will not be admitted without an order from the trustee, or a member of the Park Commission.

5. No person having measles, whooping cough, scarlet fever or other contagious disease, will be admitted to the building or grounds.

6. The Superintendent and Matron are in charge, and are empowered to maintain order and

good behavior. Children or other persons who are disorderly, or mischievous, will be expelled from the building or grounds.

7. The Playhouse is not intended as a Hospital, and the use of the cots and beds will be restricted to cases of sudden illness, accident or other necessity in the discretion of the Superintendent or Matron.

8. Children and other visitors must bring their provisions with them, as no food will be provided.

9. The use of the bathrooms will be subject to the orders of the Superintendent or Matron.

10. The use of tobacco in the Playhouse and Grounds is strictly forbidden.

THE FIDELITY INSURANCE, TRUST AND SAFE DEPOSIT COMPANY, *Trustee*
327-331 Chestnut Street

J. FOSTER OGDEN, *Superintendent*
MRS. EMMA L. OGDEN, *Matron*

PRESS OF GEORGE H BUCHANAN AND COMPANY PHILADELPHIA

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